

time. Among the religious heroes of the age not a few were irresponsible from lack of food, lack of sleep, and the nervous exaltation which they forced upon themselves by ascetic practices.¹

692. Renunciation of property. Beggary. Those who did not practice asceticism accepted its standards and applied them. A special case and one of the most important was the admiration which was rendered in the thirteenth century to the renunciation of property and the consequent high merit attributed to beggary for the two following centuries. The social consequences were so great that this view of poverty and beggary is perhaps the most important consequence in the history of the mores which go with the ascetic philosophy of life.

693. Ascetic standards. All who were indifferent or hostile to the church and religion maintained the ascetic standards for ecclesiastics in their extremest form. All the literature of the Middle Ages contains scoffing at priests, monks, and friars. In part, they were scoffed at because they did not fulfill that measure of asceticism which the scoffers chose to require, and which the clerics taught and seemed bound to practice.

694. The mendicant friars. The notion that poverty is meritorious and a good in itself was widely entertained but unformulated at the beginning of the thirteenth century. Jacques de Vitry, who was in Italy in 1216, and who left a journal of his journey,² met with an association in Lombardy, the Umiliati, who held the doctrines of the later Franciscans. The ideas which were current at that time about the primitive church were entirely fantastic. They had no foundation in fact. They were in fact deductions from ascetic ideals. The

church of the
thirteenth century was the opposite in all
respects of what the
primitive church was supposed to have been.
Francis of Assisi
and a few friends determined (1208) to live by
the principles
of the primitive church as they supposed that it
had been. It is
certain that they were only one group, which
found favorable

¹ Cf. Lea, *Inquis.*, II, 214, about Peter Martyr.

² *Nouveaux Mem. de l'Acad. des Sciences, lettres et beaux
arts de Belgique*[^]
XXIII, 30.